

Approved

Rockville Environment Commission Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, June 1, 2016

Diamondback Terrapin, City Hall,
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chair John Becker, Steve Cardon, Alicia Hosmer (via phone), Clark Reed, Lea Rosenbohm, Steve Sprague, Helen Triolo, and Fedon Vayanis.

Commissioners Absent: Amanda Matheny

Council Liaison: Mark Pierzchala

City Staff: Erica Shingara (Environmental Management)

Meeting Commencement and Introductions

The meeting convened at 7:04 pm by Chair Becker.

Meeting Agenda Review and Revision

Chair Becker requested to include general updates under the new business section and the Commission approved the agenda (7-0). Commissioner Cardon was absent for the vote.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Sprague moved and Commissioner Hosmer seconded a motion to approve the May 5, 2016 meeting minutes. The motion passed (7-0). (Commissioner Cardon was absent for the vote).

Hometown Holidays (HTH) Recap

The Commission discussed HTH and the outreach booth on May 28th. Overall, the Commission indicated that participating in the event was valuable for their education and outreach mission. It would be a worthwhile event to participate in next year if they continue to have the option for a Saturday booth. General observations include:

- Solar: Challenges with the computer/Wifi for solar assessments and the misconception that the Commission was selling solar panels. Request for a City computer and hot spot and a sign that indicated a free solar assessment for solar (not a vendor). Commissioners estimated they provided approximately 15 solar home assessments.
- Recycling: Despite the prohibition of using Styrofoam, observed the use of Styrofoam by one vendor. The number and location of blue recycling bins was an improvement from previous year. However, it would be helpful to have signs/images on the bins. The recycling wheel drew attention to the booth.
- Watersheds: The watershed model drew attention to the booth. The “plain” rain barrel did not attract as much attention as the rain barrel exhibit that pumped water; however, set up was easier. The Commission selected a winner and a backup for the rain barrel raffle.
- Overall booth setup was simpler this year and less stressful than in previous years when the booth required electricity, solar panels, and/or the movie.
 - **Action Item:** Erica Shingara will look into City’s computer policies and will arrange delivery of raffled rain barrel.

Building Energy Benchmarking

Erica Shingara reported that the Mayor and Council introduced the benchmarking ordinance on May 16 and will hold a public hearing on June 13. The Commission voted to recommend the ordinance in April and may testify or submit public comments. Commissioner Reed volunteered to testify on behalf of the Commission at the public hearing on June 13.

- **Action Item:** Commissioner Reed will draft testimony in support of the benchmarking ordinance and email it to the commission for review prior to attending the hearing.

MCPS Proposed Bus Depot

- Councilmember Pierzchala reported that two sites, 1000 Westmore Avenue and the Carver site, are under consideration for school bus depot. There are different processes for each property: Westmore is in the County and is scheduled for a mandatory referral at M-NCPPC on June 15 and the Carver Lot is scheduled for discussion at the Montgomery County Council on June 21. He also reported a large public turn-out for the Carver lot public meeting on May 11. The Mayor and Council discussed the school bus parking area on May 23rd (information is available at <https://rockmail.rockvillemd.gov/clerk/egenda.nsf/d5c6a20307650f4a852572f9004d38b8/d473390b99a92f7c85257fb1005b0778?OpenDocument>) and they are submitting letters to the County on both sites. He indicated that the Rockville Housing Enterprises will be writing letters to authorities expressing their concerns.
- While the City does not have a formal application to review for each site, Commissioners reiterated concerns about environmental/health impacts on each neighborhood (e.g., air emissions, noise, light pollution, water quality impacts from fuels, deicing, impervious runoff, and neighborhood traffic, etc.) and suggested submitting a letter to officials stating these general concerns. Chair Reed suggested a mitigation strategy for noise and air pollution could be the use of electric buses.
 - **Action Item:** Chair Becker will review the May 23 Mayor and Council agenda item and draft a letter outlining concerns for the neighborhood environmental impacts of both proposals. He will forward it to the Commission to review by June 9th in order to receive comments for submission prior to the upcoming County meetings.

Communications and REC Website

Chair Becker requested that Commissioners continue to send him photos of Commission public involvement and activities (HTH, stream cleanups, solar co-op etc.). He will compile them to send to staff for inclusion on the website to illustrate the Commission's accomplishments.

Mid-Year Check-In

The Commission discussed potential August tour options (e.g., Commissioner Triolo's house for geothermal heating & cooling, the Gude landfill, composting operation in DC, Blue Plains wastewater treatment plant, or a recycling tour at the County's transfer station).

- **Action item:** Chair Becker will research tour availability options and the Commission will vote in July to select the August tour location and date.

The Commission quickly reviewed action items from the January retreat, discussed the annual report process and when to report back to the Mayor and Council, and whether to hold a planning retreat annually or biannually. Councilmember Pierzchala indicated that the Mayor and Council have a priority initiative to review the Boards and the Commissions for consistency, including their role and scope, guidance for advocacy, and systems for creating, appointing and sunsetting. Commissioner

Sprague described the County's process for board coordination with the County Executive and the communication process and schedule. The Commission identified a goal to create an annual report to correspond to Earth Month (April) activities and that fall is a good time to review work plans and identify budget needs for next year's budget process.

Action item: Erica Shingara will send out the retreat action notes for additional review and discussion at the July meeting.

Committee Reports

- ***Energy Committee:*** Commissioner Reed reported that the RPS legislation was passed by the House and Senate, but was vetoed by Governor Hogan. It may be brought back in January. He also reported that the solar co-op party on June 1 was attended by approximately 27 people, and the next solar co-op information session will be held on June 9th.
- ***Composting and Recycling:*** Commissioner Rosenbohm reported that the committee met with Anthony Frasier to discuss strategies for improving recycling at HTH. Mr. Frazier will discuss results of these efforts at their next meeting. Commissioner Sprague reported that 7 or 8 composting options were submitted to the County Executive for review. When the options are publicly announced, the Committee can evaluate them for impacts on the City. He indicated that when the incinerator bond is paid off, funds may become available to invest in composting improvements. He inquired about Rockville attending the County's Solid Waste Advisory Committee meetings.
- ***Watershed Protection:*** Commissioner Cardon reported that the Committee continued Rainscapes Rewards outreach presentations. Chair Becker and Commissioner Vayanis attended a Rainscapes presentation at the Americana. Commissioner Vayanis emailed Fallsmeade information on the Rainscape Rebates program (approximately 52 residents).
- ***Sustainability:*** Commissioner Vayanis, Chair Becker, and Ming Hu have/plan to attend various Comprehensive Master Plan public forum meetings in May and June to provide input on environmental goals and policies. Commissioner Hosmer reported that she is waiting for more information on the Backyard Habitats Certification data and inquired about contacts for local garden clubs. Commissioner Cardon inquired about what is needed for the community to achieve certification. Chair Reed and Commissioner Hosmer volunteered to develop a schedule for outreach at the Farmer's Markets in end of June or July. Commissioner Hosmer will report at the next meeting a summary of what is needed for certification and potential strategies.

Environment Management Division Update

Erica Shingara reviewed upcoming events and projects:

- The next Comprehensive Master Plan Forums is on 6/14. Commissioners are encouraged to participate in all sessions to help set environmental and sustainability goals and actions through 2040.
- The public hearing for the building energy benchmarking ordinance is scheduled for June 13.
- Commissioners are all invited to attend the presentation of the Environmental Excellence Award at the July 11 Mayor and Council meeting.
- Artists are painting storm drain murals in Twinbrook to educate the public that healthy stream start at our storm drain inlets. A GIS map displaying the locations of the art and information on the artists will be on the website. A walking tour will be scheduled for the summer and open to the public.

- Staff drafted amendments to the Floodplain Ordinance to comply with new FEMA requirements. Staff anticipates that a draft of the revised ordinance will be brought to the Commission for review this summer.

New Business

- Chair Becker reported meeting with the Chair of the Financial Advisory Board to share information on the Environment Commission's projects and activities, how the Commission develops its work plan and schedule, and coordinates with staff on initiatives.
- Chair Becker reported on the success of the small house display at Hometown Holidays and described that the sponsor, Ecobeco, is promoting a new Healthy Homes program. He inquired if the Commission was interested in receiving a presentation by Ecobeco to learn more about how they are working to improve the health of existing homes. This could be a future topic for consideration by the Sustainability Committee.

Adjourn

The Commission adjourned by acclamation at 8:53 p.m.

Next Commission Meeting

The Commission will tentatively meet on **Thursday, July 7, 2015 at 7:00 pm** in the **Diamondback Terrapin Conference Room at the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville Maryland 20850-2321**. The public is invited to attend.